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ABSTRACT

In order to help local schools cope with the problems of migrant children, the Colorado State Department of Education conceived the idea of a mobile unit which would make periodic visits to schools serving migrant children. Originally the service provided by the units placed heavy emphasis on the diagnostic function. Accordingly, the units were designed and equipped to test hearing, sight, reading ability, and other factors affecting the children's ability to learn. As the project neared the operational phase, it became obvious that teacher training institutions in the state should also be concerned with helping teachers of migrant children to do a more professional job. Therefore, Colorado State University and Colorado University were initially selected to implement the program. Because of the promise in the early successes of the two units, and the inability to provide sufficient needed services in such a huge state, a third unit was assigned to the University of Southern Colorado in 1970. The mobile units work with local programs in local program settings and facilities. This insures that the assistance rendered by the units is "more realistic, significant, and helpful". This report presents a description of the origin of the mobile unit project, an overview of the institutional program, a description of the functions and duties of the mobile unit instructors, summaries of the programs provided by each of the cooperating higher education institutions and of some of the special activities by the unit instructors, and a discussion of project evaluations. (NQ)

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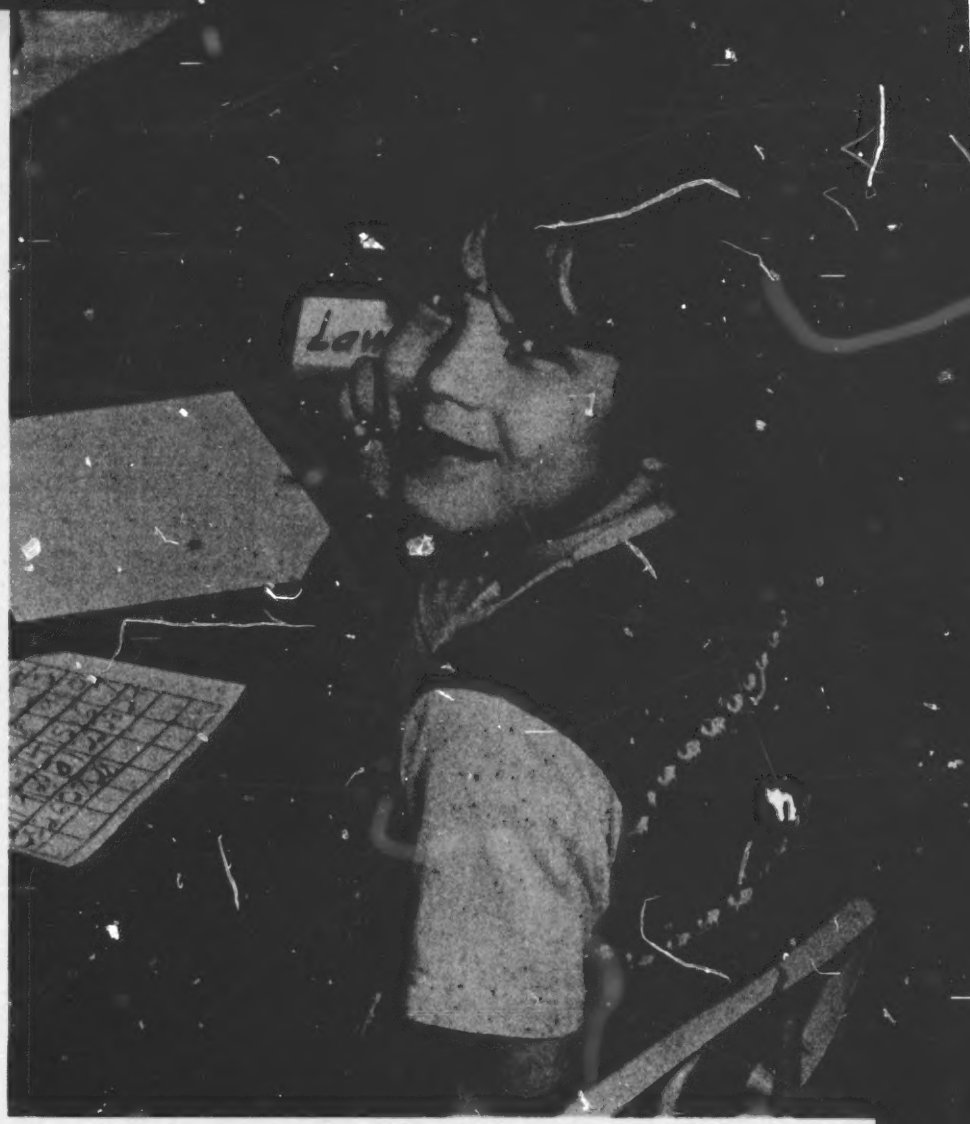

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background

THE NEED FOR TEMPORARY LABOR

The sugar beet has been an important part of Colorado Agriculture for a long time, and it was the sugar beet that stimulated the introduction of a large scale migrant labor force into the State. Sugar beet seedlings are a puny lot and their care requires meticulous thinning and weeding. The intensive hoeing and weeding operations could only be accomplished by hand labor and although mechanical and chemical methods are recent innovations which may soon eliminate the need for migrant labor in sugar beet cultivation, the migrant worker has been a feature of the summer scene in Colorado for more than half a century. Later developments required temporary labor to care for the peaches, pears, and apples in Western Colorado, and for potatoes, onions, cucumbers, melons, and similar crops in other areas of the State.

THE MIGRANT'S PROBLEMS

Over the years, the lot of the migrants has not been a happy one. The struggle for adequate housing, decent sanitation, adequate pay and freedom from discrimination has been continuous. Although progress has been made, much remains to be accomplished.

Among the many concerns of the migrants has been the question of education for their children. Too many of these children were essentially deprived of their right to an education and denied any real opportunity to escape from the migrant stream should their inclinations and abilities permit. The migrants have been an exploited people and, in a sense, their children were denied the tools which would help them escape from exploitation in the future.

Fortunately, there has been in recent times more concern in the public conscience for the plight of the migrant workers and a recognition of their worth as well as of their contributions to the economic well-being of the State. Enlightened legislation has provided funds to insure a more humane treatment and to provide better education for their children. This publication is concerned with one facet of trying to provide a better educational experience for migrant children.

THE ORIGIN OF AN IDEA

The migrant season in Colorado coincides with the prime agricultural season, basically from April to October, which has meant that the majority of children left their "home base" school, most frequently in Texas, before the end of the school year and returned in the fall after schools have been in session for several weeks. The effect of this schedule on the educational attainments of migrant children - often coupled with language problems, discrimination and poverty - was predictable and disastrous.

Although Colorado has offered programs for migrant children since 1953, there were needs that were not being met. Colorado is a large, sparsely populated state with many small communities with limited educational resources. The dissemination of information about new instructional materials, new methods and techniques, new equipment and about the special needs of migrant and culturally different children was difficult. Furthermore, teachers often did not know how to adapt materials to the special needs of migrant children and they often had little notion of the level of educational development of the children assigned to them.

After observing the efforts of local schools in attempting to cope with these problems over the years, leaders in the Colorado State Department of Education conceived the idea of a mobile unit which would make periodic visits to schools serving migrant children. The original concept of the service to be provided by the units placed heavy emphasis on the diagnostic function. Accordingly, the units were designed and equipped with devices to test hearing, sight, reading ability and other factors affecting the children's ability to learn. Two units were originally purchased and equipped. As the

project neared the operational phase, it became obvious that teacher training institutions in the state should also be concerned with helping the teachers of migrant children to do a more professional job. There was also the policy question of the appropriateness of the State Department assuming direct responsibility for a teacher training function. Accordingly, representatives of higher education were invited to attend a meeting to discuss the possibilities and, if interested, to submit proposals in which they would outline a program and assume responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the units. Five institutions submitted proposals and two, Colorado State University and Colorado University, were initially selected to implement programs. Because of the promise in the early successes of the two units, and the inability to provide sufficient needed services in such a huge state, a third unit was purchased and assigned to the University of Southern Colorado at Pueblo in 1970.

In a letter written in 1968 to possible cooperating colleges and universities, the perception of the individuals who conceived the idea of the use of the mobile units to facilitate the improved education of migrant children was spelled out in three major objectives. These were:

1. Each unit is a diagnostic center carrying sophisticated equipment including an audiometer, a telebinocular, a reading eye camera, and other equipment. Reading difficulties, whether stemming from poor eyesight, irregular eye fixation, or hearing impairment, will be detected through the use of this equipment. Appropriate referral to insure correction will be made for each child.
2. Each center is also a demonstration-resource center, and will carry a wide variety of audiovisual equipment for purposes of demonstration and in-service education for teachers. A wide variety of books, reading kits, films, and filmstrips will be available for use in the unit, as well as for lending to schools. Corrective equipment, instructional materials, and resource materials will be available for use as follow-up to diagnosis.
3. The units are also designed to accommodate eight to ten students and to serve as a learning center. Eight individual study carrels are built in, plus a teacher's console for a variety of individual and small group learning activities.

One of the writers of the first proposals from a higher education institution was prophetic in anticipating what the future might hold for the mobile units. He stated "it is anticipated that the program projected in connection with the mobile unit will show an evolutionary development. It is probable that the contributions such a unit will provide cannot be entirely foreseen and that it will be necessary, therefore, to make program adjustments as experience is gained in operation of the unit." This has been exactly the case.

Considerable emphasis was given during the first year to the activities identified in the first objective listed above. However, the need for such efforts has declined as other agencies have assumed more responsibility for the general physical welfare of migrant children. Furthermore, there may have been an overly simplified conception in the early phases of the units' operations that reading was basically the only learning problem. Experience soon indicated that problems related to lack of educational continuity, poor attendance, language barriers, cultural differences, community apathy and, on occasion, hostility, poor self-image, and similar problems created complex and difficult educational problems.

The second objective has been the most fruitful in terms of unit programs. The units have been especially effective in disseminating information and in providing examples of new instructional materials, equipment and techniques. Schools have often first learned of new materials from the unit instructors and have subsequently purchased their own. Unit instructors and local teachers have been active in evaluation of new materials as they became available and the result has been a more productive investment of available funds in instructional materials. The teacher in-service function identified in the second objective has probably become the most important single activity carried out by the mobile unit instructors.

A number of problems rendered the implementation of the third objective as stated relatively impractical. The size of the units and mechanical problems of ventilation, power, heating, storage, scheduling of students and maintenance were major deterrents to effective use. As it worked out it was much more flexible and efficient in most instances to work in the school classroom with the regular class or in other contiguous and available space. More detailed evidence of how the unit instructors have operated will become evident later in the report. The units have turned out to be most useful as an efficient transport system for books, films, film strips, games, kits, tapes, projectors and similar materials. These are demonstrated and made available for examination. They are also loaned to local schools for variable periods of time. They have served the dissemination function extremely well and the result has been local migrant programs which are well supplied with quality instructional materials.

In summary, as experience with the migrant education program has evolved, the broadened objectives of the program are currently more adequately reflected in a statement about the program which was prepared by one of the project directors. In a document prepared for publication, the director identified "five imperatives" to which the mobile units were to make effective contributions. A slightly edited and paraphrased version of the purposes reflected in the statement of these imperatives is reproduced below.

1. To make education more relevant for migratory children;
2. To provide the migratory children with an education which would achieve a higher degree of permanency;

3. To make the learning process for migrant children more relevant and more exciting;
4. To upgrade the education of migrant children more relevant level and to prepare them for the world of work;
5. To make more effective the transmission of language skills, improve communication, understand the nation's multiple cultural heritage, and develop ideals that migrant children might better understand themselves as they develop a way of life and aspirations to participate effectively as full members in today's social world.

The three mobile units contribute to the accomplishment and realization of these imperatives through work with local programs in local program settings and facilities. This insures that the assistance rendered by the units is more realistic, significant, and helpful.

organization and administration

The decision to seek the cooperation of institutions of higher education in Colorado in the implementation of the mobile unit program has turned out to have been an inspired step. The partnership which resulted among the State Department of Education, the cooperating institutions of higher learning, the public schools and other state and federal agencies, has been a productive one and has been an exemplary model of a cooperative effort to solve the complex problems associated with providing quality educational experiences for migrant children and youth.

The procedures for planning the year's work and funding the mobile units has remained constant since the inception of the program. Each year, cooperating institutions of higher education are asked to submit proposals for the subsequent funding year. In addition to criteria established by federal and state regulations, proposals submitted by individual institutions have reflected institutional experience, the unique characteristics of the institution, including the resources which are available to support the program, the special competencies of the mobile unit instructors, the philosophy and insight of the local project directors and the special needs of the territory served. The proposals are submitted to the State Director for review, comment, modification and revision as may be indicated. A budget for the subsequent year's operation is also submitted with the proposal. Once the proposal and budget are approved, individual institutions have been given considerable flexibility to exercise their own initiative in carrying out operations in their areas. Even though each unit has retained its own unique characteristics, there is close cooperation and mutual reinforcement of the efforts of the other units.

In order to insure that basic program objectives are being met and that the necessary coordination is provided, monthly meetings are held which include the State Director for Migrant Education and his assistants and representatives, the mobile unit project directors, and the mobile unit instructors from the three cooperating campuses. Meetings are sometimes attended by the representatives of other agencies, by local migrant education directors and other interested and involved people. The meetings are characterized by a high degree of openness with a free exchange of information that has helped to perpetuate a high degree of cooperation among the units. Upon

invitation, the mobile unit instructors have frequently served in the geographic areas of the other mobile units because of their own special competencies and interests. Information about consultants that have been employed is exchanged with the result that outstanding consultants have been used in all of the mobile unit territories. Cooperative relations with other agencies have also been developed and maintained which include, but are not limited to, The Colorado Migrant Council, intermediate educational agencies in Colorado which are designated as Boards of Cooperative Educational Services and other institutions of higher learning within the State. Feedback from the field is also often obtained and shared at these meetings.

At the institutional level, the project director is responsible for general administrative duties, for adherence to budgetary requirements and for assuring that a quality program is maintained. He is responsible for the employment of personnel to be paid from project funds, for general program direction and for monitoring the unit operation. The mobile unit instructor is responsible for the day-to-day operations; for recommending individuals to be employed on a temporary or consultant basis; for examining, evaluating, and recommending instructional materials for purchase; for conducting in-service sessions; for teaching demonstration classes; and in general, for providing any and all possible services which will upgrade and improve the education of migrant children that fall within the scope of the project objectives.

evolution of function

In an earlier section of this report describing the origin of the mobile unit project, some discussion of the objectives which were initially identified for the mobile units was provided. As the units now function, they show very little resemblance to the operations carried on during the first year. This can be accounted for in several ways. A much more sophisticated understanding of the needs of migrant children has been attained by all involved including the institutions of higher education, the mobile unit instructors and project directors, the local communities and the local migrant education directors and their staff. There has been an increasing use of bilingual aides and bilingual teachers and there is currently much more emphasis on the broader problems associated with migrant education than prevailed at the time the projects were initially launched. These changes have been reflected in the local schools and have influenced the roles of the mobile units. The mobile units have, of course, played an important role in stimulating some of the changes which have occurred.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there have been a gradual change in the mobile unit functions from diagnosis and testing, to dissemination of information about materials and media, to an evaluation of materials, to development of materials, to in-service education. Of course, many of these activities took place concurrently, but in terms of emphasis, it is clear that there has been a shift from the time when the emphasis was on diagnosis and testing to the present time when it is clearly on in-service activities.

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAM OVERVIEWS

During the life of the projects, nine different mobile unit instructors have served in the program. Each has brought his own unique capabilities, competencies and interests, and has placed his own individual stamp on the actual operations.

The Colorado State University unit has tended to emphasize a bilingual approach and all of its unit instructors have been bilingual. There has also been an emphasis on the Chicano culture especially as exemplified in music and art. Two of the mobile unit instructors have been Chicanos and have served as excellent models and have helped to stimulate pride and a desirable self-image in migrant children. The present instructor at Colorado State University has laid considerable emphasis on the development of intellectual skills and has done more in science and mathematics related skills than previous instructors have done.

At the University of Colorado the emphasis throughout has been very heavily on reading and on language development skills. The Colorado University program has also used the opportunities presented by the project as a vehicle for research and the project has profited from the research of graduate students which closely related to some of the unit activities.

The program at the University of Southern Colorado has had a very heavy emphasis on media as exemplified by pictures, sound recording, and videotaping of outstanding student and teacher performances. It has probably placed the most emphasis on in-service education and some experimental work has been done on teacher growth kits. The areas served by the University of Southern Colorado is rural and remote from large population centers and there is limited opportunity for graduate level study in teacher education. Accordingly, the unit at the University of Southern Colorado has served and

responded to the acute needs for in-service education for teachers in their area.

It should not be inferred from these remarks that the units do not share a common program. The point is merely made here that there are differences in emphasis; but it is also true that there are differences in need with respect to the different geographic areas, and the units try to accommodate the needs of individual local schools. However, local schools may also have needs which they have not perceived and part of the mobile unit instructor's function is to motivate teachers, stimulate improvement, and broaden the horizons of local staff to additional or alternative opportunities to further enhance the programs which local schools provide.

ACTIVITIES OF MOBILE UNIT INSTRUCTORS

The mobile unit instructors have also been used in a variety of ways to familiarize students in teacher preparation programs with the migrant program and to sensitize prospective teachers to problems in the general area of bilingual-bicultural education and to the special needs of minorities. In some cases, classes have been offered particularly for migrant teachers and administrators, but have also been open to other individuals who might have an interest in the area. Thus, the program has had an impact on the cooperating institutions of higher education in a variety of ways. Mobile unit instructors are often invited to make guest appearances and have, in turn, sometimes used students in volunteer missions to assist with the ongoing program in public schools. Other staff members from the institution have served as both paid and unpaid consultants to the programs providing still further support to the migrant program. The mobile unit instructors have also made numerous presentations at several national meetings including the National State Directors' Workshop on Migrant Education and the United States Office of Education sponsored fair of 1973.

vignettes of institutional programs

DAY BY DAY WORK ROUTINES

Many requests have been made to the State asking for detailed description of what mobile unit instructors do on a daily basis. Although the following section will clarify the work of the mobile instructors, it might be appropriate at this point to describe in general terms their functions and duties. These will vary to some extent for each instructor, but the description will provide a good general perception of the work.

About 35% of the instructor's time is spent in using the mobile van and its library of resource materials with all the migrant schools located in the unit's territory. The instructor is able to determine what schools have migrant children from the terminal operators of the Migrant Student Record Transfer System. Local migrant directors, contact workers, and field recruitment representatives also provide information about the location of migrants. Appointments with individual schools are made and the teachers and aides of migrant children are encouraged to use the resources of the mobile unit. This permits individual work with individual teachers in providing for the needs of specific children. Materials are checked out for various periods of time and a record is kept.

Keeping the unit stocked with quality and current materials requires perusing catalogues, attending exhibits, and conferring with consultants and teachers about materials that are coming on the market and which may have high utility in the classroom. Materials must be ordered, experimented with by the mobile unit instructor, and evaluated at the end of their use. This requires additional help from the mobile unit assistant and workstudy students.

Another 35% of the instructor's time is spent in planning, organizing, teaching and evaluating formal in-service classes and workshops. These are of all types and descriptions, using the talents of the mobile unit instructors, consultants in educational fields from around the state, university personnel and State Department Consultants in migrant education. Workshops and talks are also given to numerous diverse organizations both locally and nationally. Special projects to be discussed later are created and administered. Some classes are taught to university students and special appearances are made to describe aspects of migrant education in other classes.

Finally, there is daily work to be done at the office desk and in the meeting rooms. Activities include answering telephone calls, answering mail, writing of numerous reports, reproducing handouts, compiling and studying evaluation sheets, writing brochures, editing of videotapes, and attending numerous meetings and conferences. These activities comprise part of the day-to-day routine that makes up the work of the mobile unit instructor. Each unit instructor emphasizes certain aspects of this work more than others, and the individuality of the instructors and the unique characteristics of the units will become more apparent in the more detailed descriptions about each institutional program in the following sections.

As indicated previously, each mobile unit has some distinctive characteristics. The materials stocked on each unit are not identical since the needs of local schools vary from school to school and from region to region and the approaches to in-

service training and other services rendered reflect different institutional and mobile unit instructor philosophies and competencies. Agriculture in the State shows striking contrasts in crop production because of variation in climate, topography, length of growing season, and moisture conditions (irrigation or dry land farming). There are several distinct agricultural production regions and each has its own characteristic crops. These regions are geographically separated and vary substantially in terms of the season that large labor forces are required. This means that the educational problems encountered in working in the different areas of the state vary substantially. The attitudes toward migrants also vary from section to section. The different areas of the State also show different proportions of racial and ethnic minorities although Chicanos account for approximately 92 percent of the total migrant force. Capsule summaries of programs are provided for each of the cooperating higher education institutions below.

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, FORT COLLINS

Colorado State University is assigned the Northern and Western areas of the state. The migrants are predominately Mexican-American and are concentrated on the Eastern Slope, mostly in the South Platte River Valley which runs North and East of Denver. Labor intensive crops in this area are predominately sugar beets, cucumbers, onions, potatoes and some truck crops such as cabbage. The climate is cooler and the growing season shorter than that in the Arkansas Valley in the Southern part of the state.

The length of the migrant stay depends on many factors including the crop being worked, housing accommodations, language and cultural barriers, and local attitudes which may vary from area to area. In this area, there are many migrant families which have settled out of the migrant stream since farming operations tend to be diversified and employment is often available beyond the growing season of a particular crop. Services of the unit are solicited on a year around basis by most school districts in the area.

On the Western Slope, fruit production is the primary agricultural activity requiring migrant labor. In this area too, the majority of the farm labor is Mexican-American or Mexican Nationals, but there are numerous Navajo from Arizona and New Mexico, some blacks from Alabama, and a few Anglos who represent the "counter culture" and reside in nearby mountain towns. Vietnamese are also a recent new addition to the minority population in this area. The work in this area is definitely seasonal and intense during the harvest. Most of the efforts of the mobile unit on the Western Slope are during the summer when the harvest is in progress. The materials carried on the unit reflect those ethnic and regional differences, and the activities planned for this area are of shorter duration and are often direct supplements to classroom activities.

Demonstration Teaching. A significant part of the mobile unit instructor's effort is given over to demonstration teaching. The current Colorado State University program has placed much emphasis on in-classroom work with teachers and children and the creation of more concrete "hands on" types of materials most of which have been developed by the mobile unit instructor. The theme stressed is the careful listening to and responding to children that should be a part of small group work. It is common for migrant teachers and aides to work in small groups which makes it possible to give intensive attention to individual children and to pay particular attention to cues, both verbal and non-verbal, that children give. Teachers and aides are able to give thoughtful attention and consideration to individual children in making their own responses. Micro-teaching situations are employed with the teacher usually joining the activities to record the language of the session for later review and analysis. Sometimes the micro-teaching roles are reversed and the mobile unit staff takes down the language. Later analysis can reveal what level of operation individual children are exhibiting. In a small group, it is not uncommon to have several different levels of functioning represented, and it is possible from the analysis to determine if the teacher is adapting questions and responses appropriately. Analysis sheets have been developed to help with the diagnosis of the level of operation and the analysis of the teacher's language. Sometimes a classroom setting is developed around an interest center that employs an intellectual kit or manipulatable materials that invite children to talk about or handle common objects. These kits will be described in more detail below.

Materials Development. Efforts at Colorado State University have been especially centered on the development of materials which are suitable for migrant children. The emphasis on

"hands on" and highly manipulative materials is a result of examining the literature on these children that often describes them as concrete or field dependent, less verbal and confused by two sets of language symbols. If this is a reasonably adequate description, it does not necessarily have to be entirely disadvantageous. It is apparent that certain materials elicit language and often reveal the child's past experiences effortlessly without putting children on the defensive. What is attempted is a more shoulder to shoulder—rather than face to face—situation where both the teachers and students are absorbed in and excited by the materials. The teacher then learns to orchestrate curriculum objectives into the activity and is able to achieve a setting where the desired behaviors are likely to occur without being formalized into the traditional school pattern.

Among the materials which have been developed, there are several different intellectual kits. These are assortments of many varied objects that can be conceived to belong to a class. The following kits have been assembled:

a. nail kit
b. shoe kit
c. glove kit
d. key kit
e. brush kit
f. danger kit
g. button kit
h. things that fasten

Each kit is made up of the common assortment of nails, keys, etc., that includes every shape, color, size, age, texture, parent material, evidence of wear or newness and other characteristics possible. There is a sprinkling of unusual members included. In the case of the key kit, for example, a skate key, sardine tin key, and "church key" are included. These are efforts to expand the child's thinking about the concept of "keyness." The ability to sort out, classify, categorize, recognize likenesses and differences and to identify the one in many are typical, basic intellectual skills that underlie much of learning.

Success with the kits has been substantial since the objects are common and children may handle, observe and sort objects, and in the process, reveal what they know about them. They are not forced to talk about them or answer closed questions which have only one possible answer. There are enough different objects of each class included in each kit for all children to be familiar with some of them. The children also learn much from each other. Unlike many language development materials, the frequency of putting children on the spot is lessened since it is the teacher's job to look for cues rather than the child's job to perform for the teacher. It is also an occasion when English or a native language is acceptable from the bilingual child.

Science and Environmental Education Materials. Kits have been assembled and stocked on the mobile unit for a variety of science-type learning experiences. These include the following instructional units:

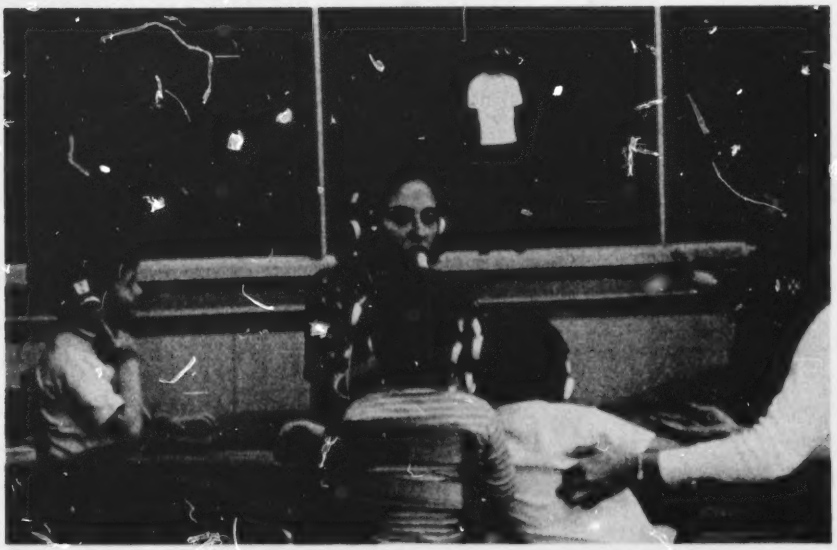
a. Electricity Unit--batteries, switches, wire, clips, bulbs, buzzers, voltage testers, tools, and plenty of books on electricity for all ages.

b. Simple Machines—Pendulums and Pulleys—bobs, cord, screw eyes, assorted rope and weights, hooks, pulleys of all sorts, and booklets in Spanish describing simple machines.

c. Water Play Unit—tubs, buckets, syphons, funnels syringes, assorted containers, food coloring, corks, sponges, etc. (it is a versatile assortment for all ages).

d. Tools—tools are included for probing the environment and include thermometers, prisms, magnifying glasses, compasses, collecting vials, measuring tapes, calipers, dissecting kits, magnets and similar items.

e. Unit on Soap Films—copper wire, solder, soldering guns, soap and glycerin. A variety of copper wands of assorted geometric shapes are created by students



who use them to gain rudimentary concepts of surface tension, vectors and refraction.

Resource Materials for the Bilingual Teacher. In cooperation with other mobile units efforts have been made to develop materials which might be useful to teachers who are basically monolingual English. Materials to cover some of the notably weak areas have been developed and include:

a. A list of all the street talk, slang idioms and swear words that children sometimes use (to help teachers detect and avoid embarrassing situations and to close the communication gap between generations).

b. A list of common plants for Colorado in Spanish and English.

c. Spanish and English name equivalents and guide to pronunciation.

Volunteer Tutoring Program. A common problem in many of the schools is that many children are either Spanish dominate or monolingual English. A partial solution to the problem is to provide bilingual tutors that can help students with their academics on a regular basis in their dominate language and to help as an interpreter on occasion for the child with the regular teacher.

The Colorado State University migrant program has provided a total of eleven such tutors for schools with migrant programs. It has also provided the training for these volunteers In some cases, students have registered for college credits through an arrangement for special studies and their work has been formally evaluated as regular college work. With one exception, all volunteer evaluations have been excellent. In each case, each volunteer has been required to plan with the host teacher and to be regular in fulfilling the established commitments.

University Teaching. At Colorado State University, the mobile unit director's graduate background has been in teacher preparation and he has had previous experience in teaching at the university level. The mobile unit instructor has had primary responsibility for organizing a course, "Teaching the Culturally Different Child," which is taught at night and is taken by migrant teachers, as well as, by other teachers functioning under Title I or Title VII programs, and administrators. Enrollment has been high and the class has been evaluated positively by students which included principals, psychologists, nurses and teachers. During one semester, the class was co-sponsored by the Curriculum Coordinator of Black Studies (a Black) and dealt in part with children in the inner city school as well as migrant and non-migrant Chicano children and native Americans. Nearly all the students were given field assignments that pertained to their own classrooms, clinics, neighborhoods or families of children with whom they dealt. The course was offered at a level which would permit both graduate and undergraduate students to enroll. All migrant staff in the region are informed of the course and are urged to attend. Often, a portion of the tuition was paid for by a sponsoring local school.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER

The University of Colorado is the most centrally located of the three institutions of higher education participating in the migrant education program. The University of Colorado has responsibility for the Central Eastern section of the state, and at the far Eastern border of the state its territory reaches North to the Nebraska-Colorado boundary. The Eastern area of Colorado is a semi-arid plateau which supports substantial farming operations where irrigation is available. The principal crops are sugar beets, corn and winter wheat. Migrant workers are used principally in the cultivation of sugar beets. About 95% of the migrants served are Mexican-Americans, but there are also some Anglo Americans and some Kickapoo Indians.

The University of Colorado mobile unit instructor is qualified in the area of reading with a masters in the field and reading materials have been emphasized during the years of its operation. The University of Colorado unit has also made use of the opportunities which the migrant education program has provided for research.

Research Project. A research project conducted in the summers of 1974 and 1975 involved testing 150 migrant children in grades one through six with the Test of Concept Utilization, a test which can be used to predict reading failure. During the summer of 1975, the Silvaroli reading test was added and administered in Spanish and English by a team of five bilingual testers to validate the reading ability of children who were predicted to fail in reading by the Test of Concept Utilization. The mobile

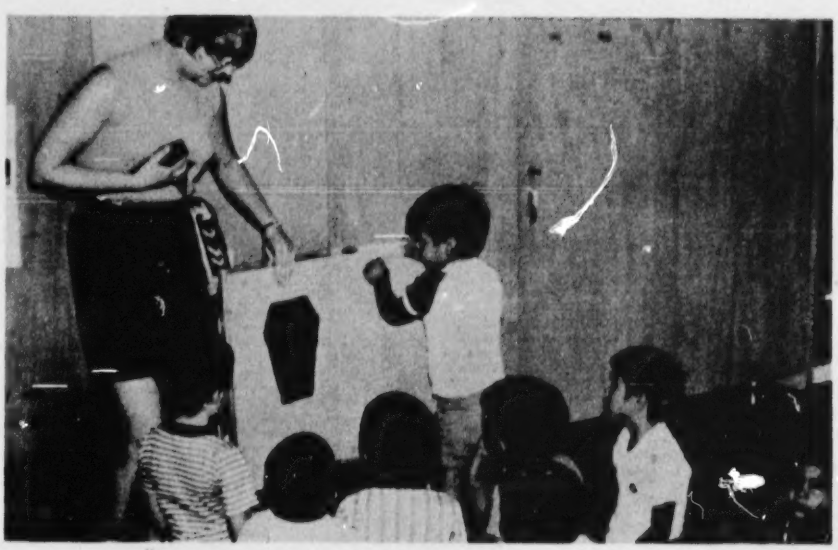
unit's language assistant played a major role in translating both tests. It is planned that during the summer of 1976, a language experience approach to the teaching of reading will be tested and emphasis will be placed on training children to read a combination of Spanish-English language which research has shown most of them speak.

Workstudy Students. Graduate and undergraduate assistants have also offered services to local district migrant programs in the field of reading. In some instances, they have tutored students. In other areas, they have given in-service work using the language experience approach in reading. This has often appeared to be the best reading approach to employ in working with migrant children.

Reading diagnosis is still a function of the University of Colorado mobile unit, but emphasis has shifted from visual and auditory screening to use of an informal reading inventory which also has been translated into Spanish.

Reading is Fundamental (RIF). Special projects are undertaken from time-to-time to encourage reading enjoyment from books. One project was the initiation of a program to stimulate reading known as RIF (Reading is Fun-damental). The University of Colorado mobile unit sponsored the RIF program during the summer of 1975. Approximately 700 children in seven summer migrant programs were given their choice of two free paperback books from a large selection written and illustrated at all grade levels both in Spanish and English. Teachers, librarians and parents were encouraged to talk about the program in advance and to encourage reading for enjoyment. It was an attempt to get children interested in books and to enjoy reading. The program was sufficiently successful that some districts are now considering continuation of the program during the regular school year.

In-Service Education Activities. The University of Colorado mobile unit has stressed informal types of in-service assistance believing that this has been the most effective approach. The problems of individual migrant children can be discussed on a one-to-one basis with regular classroom teachers and teacher aides. In



emphasizing this diagnostic-prescriptive approach, the vehicle used to establish the necessary communication is the variety of materials in all subject areas both in English and Spanish which the mobile unit carries and disseminates. The hardware and software materials include many audiovisual examples which act as an incentive in getting the regular classroom teachers to individualize their instruction to make it more appropriate to the needs of the individual migrant child.

On occasion, the mobile unit faculty has provided demonstration teaching in local migrant classrooms in the learning of English as a second language. Games, songs, rhymes, flannelboards and finger plays were all used both as instructional and demonstration techniques. Pattern drill exercises and action routines which demand the total physical involvement of the children were also used.

Since most classroom teachers are not Spanish speaking, heavy emphasis has been placed on oral language development materials in learning to use English as a second language. During the summer migrant school program, more emphasis is placed on bilingual materials which are available on the unit.

Resource Materials. The University of Colorado unit also tries to individualize its services to the unique needs of individual migrant teachers. More than two file drawers of handouts are maintained which are offered to teachers as they may need them. In many cases, these handouts have been prepared by consultants who have worked on the University of Colorado mobile unit in bilingual-bicultural education, English as a second language and career education , as well as reading. In other cases, they are reprints from pertinent publications or from articles obtained at professional meetings and conventions. These handouts have been popular and have provided instant individual in-service material for many teachers.

Classes for Credit. More formal in-service has taken the form of evening workshops using the mobile unit staff, the Colorado Department of Education Migrant Consultants, and numerous other consultants from the University of Colorado and from around the state in a variety of topic and subject areas. Three college level classes for credit have been offered and have been entitled "Bilingual Education", "Migrant Education", and "Teacher Improvement in Four Core Subject Areas."

Animal Lectures. One consultant seems to have generated more enthusiasm than most. She has given demonstration classes on animal ecology and classification by families using her own animals as living examples in an "illustrated" lecture. The summer lectures were so popular that regular school year programs have invited her back in almost all districts.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN COLORADO, PUEBLO

The mobile unit operating out of the University of Southern Colorado serves the Southern portion of the state from San Luis Valley on the West, eastward through the Arkansas River Valley to the Kansas border. The area served has had a higher incidence of poverty than other regions of the state and the schools have reflected the lower level of economic activity. The needs for educational assistance are substantial and a part of this need has been met by the mobile unit at the University of Southern Colorado.

The mobile unit of the University of Southern Colorado is characterized by its emphasis on in-service, planning, media and evaluation. Although there is significant overlap among and between these activities, they will be discussed separately.

In-Service Training. As with the other units, in-service training activities show differences between the regular year programs and summer programs. During the regular school year the in-service training is characterized by two major thrusts. These are working in individual schools with migrant staff and teachers who work with migrant children and conducting

special workshops designed for personnel who are working with migrant children.

The activities described below are illustrative of the type of work carried on in individual schools during the regular school year. The in-service sessions are usually conducted in individual classrooms with no more than two or three classroom teachers present with project representatives. The sessions are about one hour in duration and take place during the regular school day. While the mobile unit instructor is working with the small group of teachers or other staff, the mobile unit assistant is providing educational experiences, often through the vehicle of media, to the teachers' classes somewhere else in the school building. The content of the activities with the staff varies with the interests of the group, but generally consists of some migrant cultural awareness activities, some activities related to the instruction of migrant children, and the interpretation and use of the Migrant Student Record Transfer System Form. More interaction is possible and stimulated by the practice of working with small groups. Sometimes four, five or even six sessions are given with this format in a single school, in a day. Besides group sessions in individual schools, work is also done individually with the migrant staff members. Emphasis currently is being placed on developing individualized written record keeping systems. Group workshops during the regular school year are generally held on a regional basis and often include such topics as migrant cultural awareness, oral language development, English as a second language, music in the bilingual classroom, and planning for the next workshop. Typically, four regional workshops are scheduled for the regular school year.

During the summer, the mobile unit program employs practicing master teachers to assist local migrant programs in serving the needs of migrant children. A consultant or consultant team is assigned to each program and works with the local staff in planning and organizing diagnosis and prescription, improving staff instructional competencies, and assisting in any other area where the program is seen to have specific needs. Several factors have contributed to the success of this approach. These are:

1. The consultants themselves are practicing master teachers who use diagnostic and individualized approaches in their own schools, making their perspective "practical and realistic" rather than theoretical.

2. Consultants are assigned to a specific school and work there for an extended period of time from the planning stages, through the follow-up stages, developing meaningful relationships with migrant staff and children.

3. The consultants work in real situations with migrant children and staff in the classroom.

Opportunities are also provided to summer school migrant staff to obtain college credit through the in-service program. Graduate credit is offered for teachers and administrators and undergraduate credit is available for aides and other support personnel. An innovative development in the University of Southern Colorado program has been the attempt to individualize instruction in graduate credit courses. The individualization is attained through use of Teacher Growth Kits which have been developed by the project director at the University of Southern Colorado. The nature and organization of these kits is indicated by the title, "Stages in the Growth of A Teacher–A Hypothetical Construct." The stages include:

I. Discipline and Control
II. Organization and Development
III. Individualized Instruction
IV. Diagnostic Learning
V. Multiple Resource Learning
VI. Leadership

The modules were developed to promote growth in each of these levels. Migrant staff working with the mobile unit instructor and his assistants, have often selected modules on which they wish to work. Written evaluations of the use of these materials has been very encouraging.

Progress is also being made in individualizing the undergraduate courses. The courses are designed to provide opportunity for growth while the migrant staff members are participating in real school experiences. Meaningful out of classroom experiences are designed for participating staff and include visits to other migrant schools and to migrant homes. These are considered to be a part of the mobile unit's function in the coordination of in-service activities.

Another aspect of the University of Southern Colorado's mobile unit's operation is the hiring of a migrant cultural specialist for the summer programs. A person is selected who has a thorough knowledge of the

migrant culture and, for this reason an ex-migrant, usually a student, is employed to help with this aspect of the program. The specialist's job is to promote more awareness of migrant culture in the migrant staff of the local programs served by the unit.

Program Planning. Considerable emphasis has been placed on planning techniques in the area served by the University of Southern Colorado. This procedure has proven to be useful to the project director and the mobile unit instructor in planning their activities and has enabled them to provide better services to the local schools; but it is also of value to the staffs of local schools in enabling them to plan and carry out more effective programs. Migrant aides have met with representatives of the University to assist in planning an undergraduate course and related activities for undergraduate college credit. Master teachers have met with the mobile unit staff to develop and improve the Teacher Growth Kits previously mentioned. The local program directors have met with the mobile unit staff in order to plan activities which would be of most assistance to them. The consultants to be used in the summer program also meet with representatives of the local schools in order to preplan for some of the individual summer activities.

The mobile unit has been instrumental in meeting with administrators from four colleges and universities which serve the territory in order to make arrangements for migrant staff to obtain college credit for migrant course in-service work at the respective institutions.

The mobile unit has taken leadership in emphasizing the need for preplanning for summer migrant programs. Good summer programs require much orientation, planning and organization and the mobile unit has offered pre-service training sessions beginning six or more weeks before the start of the school in order to help assure that adequate planning is accomplished. Sessions are held in at least three different locations in the territory served in order to accommodate all of the migrant programs which have already selected most of their summer school personnel. The pre-service activities usually include an orientation to migrant education, the different components of migrant education, total staff planning activities, orientation to the college credit components of the in-service program and availability of consultants provided by the mobile unit to each school to insure coordination and as effective utilization of the consultant services and competencies as possible.

Media and Materials. The mobile unit instructor of the University of Southern Colorado has been extremely effective in promoting the exchange of information, ideas and techniques. Media have been used extensively to accomplish this particular function. Pictures and videotapes are made of creative and stimulating activities as they happen in the migrant education classroom. This material is edited and refined and becomes available for a variety of special uses.

Pictures and sometimes videotapes taken of local migrant programs are often returned to them to assist in their public relations activities. Media, particularly videotape, are also used in local migrant programs to promote total family involvement. Videotapes are shown in migrant camps to illustrate for parents what is happening in the school while they are working in the fields. Parents are encouraged and invited to become involved in local program family night activities. Pictures and videotapes are often used with other migrant education agencies to assist them in their public relations and in their in-service activities. It is obvious that in this manner, the excellent programs, techniques, and examples of creative teaching get broad exposure not only in the area served by the University of Southern Colorado but also in the areas of the other units.

Coordination with Home-Base Schools. Attempts have been made to coordinate and integrate the educational experiences provided for migrant children by establishing better communication with their home-base school. The University of Southern Colorado mobile unit instructor has made two trips to Texas to facilitate this communication by visiting selected home-base schools. He was once accompanied by the other mobile unit instructors and once by three local program directors.

Evaluation. Continuous efforts are made to obtain evaluation of the effectiveness of all components of the mobile unit program. Written evaluation feedbacks have been obtained from almost every local program staff member. This feedback enables an assessment of the needs of local programs to be made as well as providing valuable information about the quality of services rendered by the mobile unit. More specifically, the evaluation procedure can be described as follows:

1. The evaluation forms are brief and consistent and they allow for both quantitative and brief qualitative feedback.

2. The evaluation forms are distributed in person to all staff members in a local program and are personally collected by the mobile unit staff the same day.

3. The data from the written evaluation forms is tallied in such a way as to give both an overall picture and a detailed feedback. The analysis obtained from these written feedbacks from the people served provide a good basis for judging the impact and contribution of the mobile unit program.

special activities

The mobile unit instructors have been involved, both directly and indirectly and in varying degrees, with a number of special activities related to migrant education. These activities have had a variety of objectives ranging all the way from trying to provide broadening education experiences for migrant children to activities designed to stimulate parental involvement and interest in the education and the educational activities in which their children are participating. These have ranged all the way from cultural activities such as visits to museums or attendance at performances of nationally known groups when significant cultural implications exist to individual camping trips, to a migrant olympics, to visits to a working ranch, to local family night fiestas.

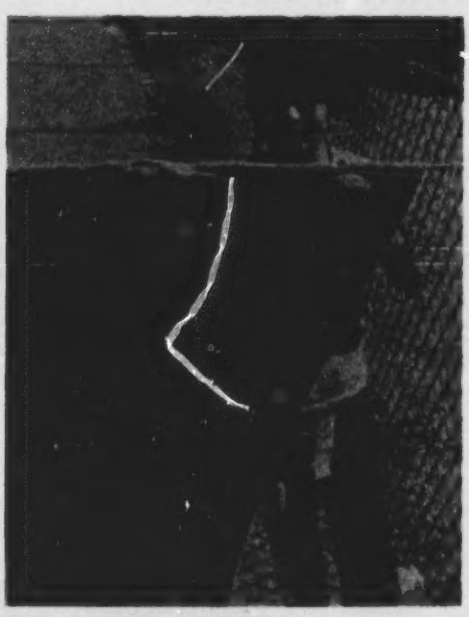
The mobile units have been involved to the extent of furnishing materials, presenting programs, helping to organize and plan and, in general, contributing in any possible way they could, to the carrying out of this extended and broad gauge educational program. A few of the activities of the special activities are discussed in somewhat more detail below.

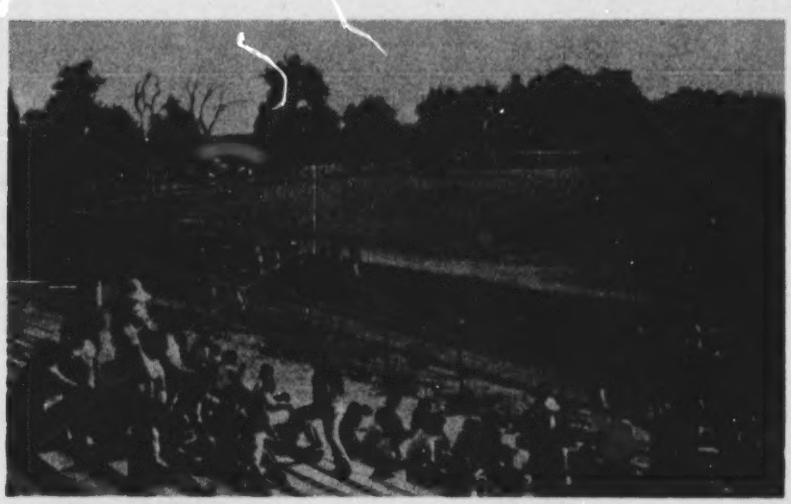
MIGRANT OLYMPICS

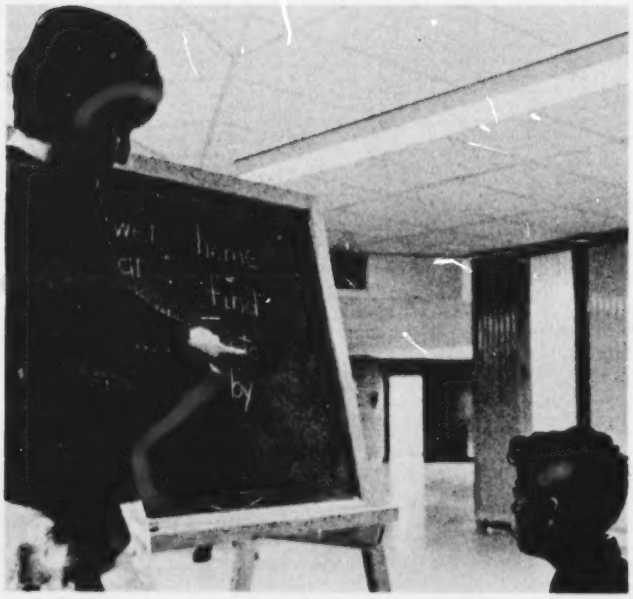
The University of Colorado mobile unit carried primary responsibility for the organization and sponsoring of the first state-wide Olympics which was held at the University of Colorado campus in the summer of 1975. Approximately 300 children ranging in ages from ten to fifteen years from approximately twenty different summer migrant programs throughout the state took part in this activity. The Olympics were held for three days in July and were planned to improve the self-concept of migrant children and to provide them with the opportunity to visit a university campus. Each student was given a key to his room in the residence hall which was shared with another migrant student. The students were responsible for their linen, for following the program schedule of events and for getting to meals on time. This proved to be a good opportunity to promote responsible and independent behavior away from home while at the same time demonstrating sportsmanship and team work on the playing fields and in the swimming pool.

ADULT MODELS AND OCCUPATIONAL ROLES

All three of the mobile units have attempted various activities to promote and improve self-concept among migrant children. All programs have used ex-migrants in order to demonstrate alternative life styles and alternative modes of making a living. One of the Colorado State University mobile unit's instructors was an ex-migrant and the University of Colorado has used an ex-migrant who dropped out of school but who obtained his high school diploma by taking the Test of General Education Development. He talked to migrant children about his past work and was intended to serve as a possible role model for them. As indicated previously, the University of Southern Colorado has employed an ex-migrant as a migrant cultural specialist in order to promote a better understanding of migrant culture among local school staff. Colorado State University has







done some experimental work to provide occupational models also. In one case, an upholsterer came to the school and demonstrated how furniture could be reupholstered. This proved to be an exciting and valuable experience. As another example, the University of Colorado employed two Mexican-American consultants to work with migrant children in the summers of 1972 and 1973 in the classroom. They provided bilingual music, cooking and language experiences as well as serving as appropriate models for migrant children.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The mobile units have contributed to making parental involvement more exciting and more productive in a variety of ways. The unit instructors have gone into the camps to show videotapes and other materials which stimulate interest in the programs. They have participated in family night activities by providing films or other materials, videotapes of school activities and in some cases, presenting programs on their own. One of the mobile unit instructors was particularly successful in using Spanish music and songs at these occasions, both for their entertainment value and for their value in attaching status and importance to certain aspects of the migrant culture.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

A number of factors contribute to making the summer program an ideal time to capitalize on outdoor learning activities. These have taken the form of field trips, camping trips, summer camps and visits to a working ranch. Many resources for outdoor learning are available in Colorado which provides an immense natural laboratory, use of which is facilitated by the weather, the flexibility of scheduling, the small class sizes and similar factors. The role of the mobile units has varied from providing in-service materials, to helping teachers make use of such rich instructional resources through appropriate workshops, and by making a pictorial and videotape record of activities. They also promote outdoor education through dissemination of information about successful efforts by other local districts in the state.

One such outdoor education experience sponsored by the local Board of Cooperative Services has been conducted at Trinity Ranch near Wetmore, Colorado. Children and youth in attendance ranged from seven to fifteen years of age and spent five full days and nights on the ranch in an intensive outdoor educational program. The educational components of the camping experience were centered in four areas: development of motor skills, recognition of man as a part of the environment with particular attention to the geological and biotic habitat; arts and crafts; and nature walks including the identification of native flora and fauna. Recreation included volleyball, baseball, football and swimming. Also included were cultural activities including group singing, games and story telling. A cookout and campout in the mountains was also scheduled for one of the evenings.

The Trinity Ranch experience is an example of specialized programs designed to take migrant children out of their familiar setting for a period of time to permit and provide a rich and varied set of experiences and learning activities for them.

project evaluations

The administrators and mobile unit instructors responsible for the organization and operation of the mobile units have always been sensitive to the fact that their continued existence is dependent upon the quality of service which they could render and its acceptability in the local schools. In the early days of the projects, the mobile units were regarded as something of a curiosity and in some communities they were viewed with genuine hostility. Their role was not well understood and it was undoubtedly sometimes regarded as a further intrusion of the state and of institutions of higher education into local affairs. Fortunately, the attitude that the mobile unit instructors were "outsiders" has disappeared and since all project directors and mobile unit instructors have made it a point to emphasize that they were on the scene to serve the needs of local schools and did not come with ready-made panaceas for the education of migrants, they have steadily gained greater and greater acceptance and come to be regarded as professional colleagues and partners engaged in furthering a common cause. Local school districts have not been reticent in voicing their complaints when dissatisfaction has existed and mobile unit directors and instructors have shown a ready disposition to modify their activities or respond more effectively when circumstances indicated a need to do so.

In terms of ongoing evaluation, The University of Southern Colorado particularly has made an outstanding effort to document the effect of their work. All mobile units now pass out evaluation forms to obtain feedback from summer and regular school year staffs about the work being done and to solicit suggestions for improvement or for needed new services or new projects.

Needs assessments are also made. Colorado State University has mailed out a form to obtain such information. The University of Colorado staff holds informal conferences with principals and supervisors to obtain information about needs to be met. The formal program planning at the University of Southern Colorado is, in part, an assessment of perceived needs.

At the state level, the monthly meetings have offered an opportunity for the State Director of Migrant Education to counsel with project directors and instructors on any problems which he may have uncovered or any adverse evaluations that have been made. In turn, project directors have not hesitated to consult with the State Director relative to problems which may have arisen in their territories. Mobile unit instructors have also encountered problems which they have referred to the State Director. However, this has not been a major function since it is important that local schools not regard the mobile unit instructors as agents of the State for reporting on their activities.

The fact that the State Department of Education has continued to fund the mobile units into their seventh year is at least one indication of the evaluation of the activities that has been placed upon them at the state level.

PROBLEM AREAS

In the continuous and close contact which the mobile unit instructors have with local schools, they become aware of recurrent problems which appear as they move from school to school. Protocol obviously requires that the mobile unit instructors cannot engage in the practice of making invidious school comparisons. At the same time, the instructors would be professionally incompetent if they did not make their own private assessment and note that some schools accomplish certain tasks better than others.

Among the problems that are identified, there are a number which relate to various aspects of staffing. In some cases, the best qualified staff do not appear to have been recruited for the summer programs. This is due to a variety of reasons including the short supply of qualified bilingual teachers, unavailability in remote

areas, short period of potential employment or pressure to employ teachers already in the school or individuals available in the community. Although employing the local personnel may be a legitimate objective, it should not take priority over the needs of migrant children to benefit from the best possible program. Considering that some of the children are monolingual Spanish, it is imperative that someone, preferable the classroom teacher, be bilingual. In the absence or unavailability of bilingual teachers, bilingual aides have often been used and have been highly successful, but the problem of recruiting a cadre of professional, committed and highly qualified staff remains as one of the continuing problems for local schools as viewed from the perspective of the mobile unit instructors.

A closely related problem relates to the high degree of turnover which exists in some programs. Considering the short duration of summer programs, particularly, there is very limited time for teachers to become oriented or adjusted to the needs of migrant children. Thus, a certain amount of continuity and familiarity with the program is highly desirable and contributes substantially to an effective program.

The mobile unit instructors sometimes find themselves spread over too much geographical territory and unable to provide as much service either as they desire or as the schools need within the time frame which they have available to them. In addition, it sometimes, happens that schools have needs which neither the mobile unit instructors nor the available consultants have the necessary competencies to provide.

In another area, mobile unit instructors have felt that the migrant and the regular school programs have not been sufficiently integrated activities. There is a tendency to regard the migrant program as an isolated, separate activity of the school. In a few instances, this philosophy has been reflected in local schools which have seemed to regard the summer program as primarily a recreational activity with little emphasis on academic learnings. The intervention of the state and mobile units has helped to shift such programs into a more desirable direction.

In summary, although the mobile unit instructors recognize many problems, it also seems evident that considerable progress is being made toward a resolution of some of them. For example, the incidence of bilingual teachers and aides is higher now than it has been at any time in the past and considerable progress has been made recently in this direction. Furthermore, there can be little doubt that the status of the migrant in Colorado has steadily improved during the last several years and that the quality of the summer programs has been substantially improved during this time. The mobile unit directors and instructors feel that they have had at least a small part in helping to upgrade the education of migrant children in the State of Colorado.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Since the initiation of the mobile unit programs seven years ago, great strides have been made in improving the professional quality of the services rendered to the local schools. Undoubtedly, the program will continue to evolve as it has in the past and the mobile units will continue to adjust their programs in response to changing conditions and needs in the local schools and to the need as perceived by project directors and mobile unit instructors. Undoubtedly, considerable attention will continue to be devoted to the broad problems of migrant education including such areas as the culturally different child, English as a second language, language development, bilingual-bicultural programs, and to occupational and world of work information as reflected in the career education movement today.

Probably the greatest uncertainty lies in the question of future funding. Migrant education, along with many other aspects of education, may suffer funding cuts as the nation scales down its efforts in behalf of education. It is certain that the institutions of higher education are in no position to assume the costs of the program. Most of them are under severe financial stress with reductions in staff and curtailment of programs a distinct possibility. Thus, it is probable that the future of the program hinges very directly on the question of continued federal funding. In the meantime, the mobile units will continue their efforts to improve and upgrade their services in behalf of migrant children.